

TALKS
WITH
SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

THREE VOLUMES
IN ONE

Extract Version



TENTH EDITION

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15th May, 1935

Talk 3

A question was asked as to the nature of happiness.

M.: If a man thinks that his happiness is due to external causes and his possessions, it is reasonable to conclude that his happiness must increase with the increase of possessions and diminish in proportion to their diminution. Therefore if he is devoid of possessions, his happiness should be nil. What is the real experience of man? Does it conform to this view?

In deep sleep the man is devoid of possessions, including his own body. Instead of being unhappy he is quite happy. Everyone desires to sleep soundly. The conclusion is that happiness is inherent in man and is not due to external causes. One must realise his Self in order to open the store of unalloyed happiness.

Talk 8

“Can anyone get any benefit by repeating sacred syllables (*mantras*) picked up casually?”

M.: “No. He must be competent and initiated in such *mantras*.” Maharshi illustrated this by the following story: A King visited his Premier in his residence. There he was told that the Premier was engaged in repetition of sacred syllables (*japa*). The King waited for him and, on meeting him, asked what the *japa* was. The Premier said that it was the holiest of all, *Gayatri*. The King desired to be initiated by the Premier. But the Premier confessed his inability to initiate him. Therefore the King learned it from someone else, and meeting the Minister later he repeated the *Gayatri* and wanted to know if it was right. The Minister said that the *mantra* was correct, but it was not proper for him to say it. When pressed for an explanation, the Minister called to a page close by and ordered him to take hold of the King. The order was not obeyed. The order was often repeated, and still not obeyed. The King flew into a rage and ordered the same man to hold the Minister, and it was immediately done. The Minister laughed and said that the incident was the explanation required by the King. “How?” asked the King. The Minister replied, “The order was the same and the executor also, but the

authority was different. When I ordered, the effect was nil, whereas, when you ordered, there was immediate effect. Similarly with *mantras*.”

30th January, 1935

Talk 20

Mr. Evans-Wentz: Is solitude necessary for a *jnani*?

M.: Solitude is in the mind of man. One might be in the thick of the world and maintain serenity of mind; such a one is in solitude. Another may stay in a forest, but still be unable to control his mind. He cannot be said to be in solitude. Solitude is a function of the mind. A man attached to desire cannot get solitude wherever he may be; a detached man is always in solitude.

D.: So then, one might be engaged in work and be free from desire and keep up solitude. Is it so?

M.: Yes. Work performed with attachment is a shackle, whereas work performed with detachment does not affect the doer. He is, even while working, in solitude.

D.: They say that there are many saints in Tibet who remain in solitude and are still very helpful to the world. How can it be?

M.: It can be so. Realisation of the Self is the greatest help that can be rendered to humanity. Therefore, the saints are said to be helpful, though they remain in forests. But it should not be forgotten that solitude is not in forests only. It can be had even in towns, in the thick of worldly occupations.

D.: It is not necessary that the saints should mix with people and be helpful to them?

M.: The Self alone is the Reality; the world and the rest of it are not. The realised being does not see the world as different from himself.

D.: Thus then, the saint's realisation leads to the uplift of humanity without the latter being aware of it. Is it so?

M.: Yes. The help is imperceptible but is still there. A saint helps the whole of humanity, unknown to the latter.

D.: Would it not be better if he mixed with others?

M.: There are no others to mix with. The Self is the one and only Reality.

D.: If there be a hundred Self-realised men will it not be to the greater benefit of the world?

M.: When you say 'Self' you refer to the unlimited, but when you add 'men' to it, you limit the meaning. There is only one Infinite Self.

D.: Yes, yes, I see! Sri Krishna has said in the Gita that work must be performed without attachment and such work is better than idleness. Is it Karma Yoga?

M.: What is said is given out to suit the temperament of the hearers.

D.: In Europe it is not understood by the people that a man in solitude can be helpful. They imagine that men working in the world can alone be useful. When will this confusion cease?

Will the European mind continue wading in the morass or will it realise the truth?

M.: Never mind Europe or America. Where are they except in your mind? Realise your Self and then all is realised.

If you dream and see several men, and then wake up and recall your dream, do you try to ascertain if the persons of your dream creation are also awake?

D.: What does Maharshi think of the theory of universal illusion (*Maya*)?

M.: What is *Maya*? It is only Reality.

D.: Is not *Maya* illusion?

M.: *Maya* is used to signify the manifestations of the Reality. Thus *Maya* is only Reality.

D.: Some say that Sri Sankaracharya was only intellectual and not realised. Is it so?

M.: Why worry about Sankaracharya? Realise your own Self. Others can take care of themselves.

D.: Jesus Christ cured people of their diseases. Is that only an occult power (*siddhi*)?

M.: Was Jesus aware at the time that he was curing men of their diseases? He could not have been conscious of his powers. There is a story related as follows: Jesus had once cured a man of his blindness. The man turned wicked, in course of time. Meeting him after some years, Jesus observed his wickedness and asked him why he was so. He replied saying that, when he was blind, he could not commit any sin. But after Jesus had cured him of blindness he grew wicked and Jesus was responsible for his wickedness.

D.: Was not Jesus a Perfected Being possessing occult powers (*siddhi*)?

M.: He could not have been aware of his powers (*siddhis*).

D.: Is it not good to acquire them, such as telepathy, etc.?

M.: Telepathy or radio enables one to see and hear from afar. They are all the same, hearing and seeing. Whether one hears from near or far does not make any difference in hearing. The fundamental factor is the hearer, the subject. Without the hearer or the seer, there can be no hearing or seeing. The latter are the functions of the mind. The occult powers (*siddhis*) are

therefore only in the mind. They are not natural to the Self. That which is not natural, but acquired, cannot be permanent, and is not worth striving for.

They denote extended powers. A man is possessed of limited powers and is miserable; he wants to expand his powers so that he may be happy. But consider if it will be so; if with limited perceptions one is miserable, with extended perceptions the misery must increase proportionately. Occult powers will not bring happiness to anyone, but will make him all the more miserable!

Moreover what are these powers for? The would-be occultist (*siddha*) desires to display the *siddhis* so that others may appreciate him. He seeks appreciation, and if it is not forthcoming he will not be happy. There must be others to appreciate him. He may even find another possessor of higher powers. That will cause jealousy and breed unhappiness. The higher occultist (*siddha*) may meet a still higher *siddha* and so on until there will come one who will blow up everything in a trice. Such is the highest adept (*siddha*) and He is God or the Self.

Which is the real power? Is it to increase prosperity or bring about peace? That which results in peace is the highest perfection (*siddhi*).

D.: But common people in Europe and America would not appreciate such an attitude and would desire a display of powers and instructions by lectures, etc.

M.: Lectures may entertain individuals for a few hours without improving them. Silence on the other hand is permanent and benefits the whole of humanity.

D.: But silence is not understood.

M.: It does not matter. By silence, eloquence is meant. Oral lectures are not so eloquent as silence. The Silence is unceasing eloquence. The Primal Master, Dakshinamurti, is the ideal. He taught his *rishi* disciples by silence.

D.: But then there were disciples for Him. It was all right. Now it is different. They must be sought after and helped.

M.: That is a sign of ignorance. The power which created you has created the world. If it can take care of you, it can similarly take care of the world also.

D.: What does Bhagavan think of the "lost soul" mentioned by Jesus Christ?

M.: Think what there is to be lost. Is there anything to lose? What matters is only that which is natural. Such must be eternal and cannot be experienced. That which is born must die; that which is acquired must be lost. Were you born? You are ever existent. The Self can never be lost.

D.: Buddha advises the eight-fold path as being the best so that none might be lost.

M.: Yes. Such is called Raja Yoga by the Hindus.

D.: Is yoga advised for a spiritual aspirant?

M.: Yoga helps control of mind.

D.: But does it not lead to occult powers (*siddhis*) which are said to be dangerous?

M.: But you qualified your question by the words “a spiritual aspirant”. You did not mean a seeker of powers (*siddhis*)?

31st January, 1935

Talk 21

Mrs. Piggott returned from Madras for a further visit. She asked questions relating to diet regulation.

D.: What diet is prescribed for a *sadhak* (one who is engaged in spiritual practices)?

M.: *Satvic* food in limited quantities.

D.: What is *satvic* food?

M.: Bread, fruits, vegetables, milk, etc.

D.: Some people take fish in North India. May it be done?

No answer was made by the Maharshi.

D.: We Europeans are accustomed to a particular diet; change of diet affects health and weakens the mind. Is it not necessary to keep up physical health?

M.: Quite necessary. The weaker the body the stronger the mind grows.

D.: In the absence of our usual diet our health suffers and the mind loses strength.

M.: What do you mean by strength of mind?

D.: The power to eliminate worldly attachment.

M.: The quality of food influences the mind. The mind feeds on the food consumed.

D.: Really! How can the Europeans adjust themselves to *satvic* food only?

M.: (Pointing to Mr. Evans-Wentz) You have been taking our food. Do you feel uncomfortable on that account?

Mr. Evans-Wentz: No. Because I am accustomed to it.

D.: What about those not so accustomed?

M.: Habit is only adjustment to the environment. It is the mind that matters. The fact is that the mind has been trained to think certain foods tasty and good. The food material is to be had both in vegetarian and non-vegetarian diet equally well. But the mind desires such food as it is accustomed to and considers tasty.

D.: Are there restrictions for the realised man in a similar manner?

M.: No. He is steady and not influenced by the food he takes.

D.: Is it not killing life to prepare meat diet?

M.: *Ahimsa* stands foremost in the code of discipline for the yogis.

D.: Even plants have life.

M.: So too the slabs you sit on!

D.: May we gradually get ourselves accustomed to vegetarian food?

M.: Yes. That is the way.

4th February, 1935

Talk 27

M.: An examination of the ephemeral nature of external phenomena leads to *vairagya*. Hence enquiry (*vichara*) is the first and foremost step to be taken. When *vichara* continues automatically, it results in a contempt for wealth, fame, ease, pleasure, etc. The 'I' thought becomes clearer for inspection. The source of 'I' is the Heart - the final goal. If, however, the aspirant is not temperamentally suited to *Vichara Marga* (to the introspective analytical method), he must develop *bhakti* (devotion) to an ideal - may be God, Guru, humanity in general, ethical laws, or even the idea of beauty. When one of these takes possession of the individual, other attachments grow weaker, *i.e.*, dispassion (*vairagya*) develops. Attachment for the ideal simultaneously grows and finally holds the field. Thus *ekagrata* (concentration) grows simultaneously and imperceptibly - with or without visions and direct aids.

In the absence of enquiry and devotion, the natural sedative *pranayama* (breath regulation) may be tried. This is known as *Yoga Marga*. If life is imperilled the whole interest centres round the one point, the saving of life. If the breath is held the mind cannot afford to (and does not) jump at its pets - external objects. Thus there is rest for the mind so long as the breath is held. All attention being turned on breath or its regulation, other interests are lost. Again, passions are attended with irregular breathing, whereas calm and happiness are

attended with slow and regular breathing. Paroxysm of joy is in fact as painful as one of pain, and both are accompanied by ruffled breaths. Real peace is happiness. Pleasures do not form happiness. The mind improves by practice and becomes finer just as the razor's edge is sharpened by stropping. The mind is then better able to tackle internal or external problems. If an aspirant be unsuited temperamentally for the first two methods and circumstantially (on account of age) for the third method, he must try the Karma *Marga* (doing good deeds, for example, social service). His nobler instincts become more evident and he derives impersonal pleasure. His smaller self is less assertive and has a chance of expanding its good side. The man becomes duly equipped for one of the three aforesaid paths. His intuition may also develop directly by this single method.

D.: Can a line of thought or a series of questions induce Self-hypnotism? Should it not be reduced to a single point analysing the unanalysable, elementary and vaguely perceived and elusive 'I'?

M.: Yes. It is really like gazing into vacancy or a dazzling crystal or light.

D.: Can the mind be fixed to that point? How?

M.: If the mind is distracted, ask the question promptly, "To whom do these distracting thoughts arise?" That takes you back to the 'I' point promptly.

D.: How long can the mind stay or be kept in the Heart?

M.: The period extends by practice.

D.: What happens at the end of the period?

M.: The mind returns to the present normal state. Unity in the Heart is replaced by variety of phenomena perceived. This is called the outgoing mind. The heart-going mind is called the resting mind.

D.: Is all this process merely intellectual or does it exhibit feeling predominantly?

M.: The latter.

D.: How do all thoughts cease when the mind is in the Heart?

M.: By force of will, with strong faith in the truth of the Master's teaching to that effect.

D.: What is the good of this process?

M.: (a) Conquest of the will - development of concentration.

(b) Conquest of passions - development of dispassion.

(c) Increased practice of virtue - (*samatva*) equality to all.

D.: Why should one adopt this self-hypnotism by thinking on the unthinkable point? Why not adopt other methods like gazing into light, holding the breath, hearing music, hearing internal sounds, repetition of the sacred syllable (*Pranava*) or other *mantras*?

M.: Light-gazing stupefies the mind and produces catalepsy of the will for the time being, yet secures no permanent benefit. Breath control benumbs the will for the time being only. Sound-hearing produces similar results - unless the *mantra* is sacred and secures the help of a higher power to purify and raise the thoughts.

Talk 28

D.: What is the interrelation between regulation of thought and regulation of breath?

M.: Thought (intellectual) and respiration, circulation, etc. (vegetative) activities are both different aspects of the same - the individual life. Both depend upon (or metaphorically 'reside' or 'inhere' in) life. Personality and other ideas spring from it like the vital activity. If respiration or other vital activity is forcibly repressed, thought also is repressed. If thought is forcibly slowed down and pinned to a point, the vital activity of respiration is slowed down, made even and confined to the lowest level compatible with life. In both cases the distracting variety of thought is temporarily at an end. The interaction is noticeable in other ways also. Take the will to live. That is thought-power. That sustains and keeps up life when other vitality is almost exhausted and delays death. In the absence of such will-power death is accelerated. So thought is said to carry life with it in the flesh and from one fleshy body to another.

D.: Are there any aids to (1) concentration and (2) casting off distractions?

M.: Physically the digestive and other organs are kept free from irritation. Therefore food is regulated both in quantity and quality. Non-irritants are eaten, avoiding chillies, excess of salt, onions, wine, opium, etc. Avoid constipation, drowsiness and excitement, and all foods which induce them. Mentally take interest in one thing and fix the mind on it. Let such interest be all-absorbing to the exclusion of everything else. This is dispassion (*vairagya*) and concentration. God or *mantra* may be chosen. The mind gains strength to grasp the subtle and merge into it.

D.: Distractions result from inherited tendencies. Can they be cast off too?

M.: Yes. Many have done so. Believe it! They did so because they believed they could. *Vasanas* (predispositions) can be obliterated. It is done by concentration on that which is free from *vasanas* and yet is their core.

D.: How long is the practice to continue?

M.: Till success is achieved and until yoga-liberation becomes permanent. Success begets success. If one distraction is conquered the next is conquered and so on, until all are finally conquered. The process is like reducing an enemy's fort by slaying its man-power - one by one, as each issues out.

D.: What is the goal of this process?

M.: Realising the Real.

D.: What is the nature of the Reality?

M.: (a) Existence without beginning or end - eternal.

(b) Existence everywhere, endless, infinite.

(c) Existence underlying all forms, all changes, all forces, all matter and all spirit.

The many change and pass away (phenomena), whereas the One always endures (noumenon).

(d) The one displacing the triads, *i.e.*, the knower, the knowledge and the known. The triads are only appearances in time and space, whereas the Reality lies beyond and behind them. They are like a mirage over the Reality. They are the result of delusion.

D.: If 'I' also be an illusion, who then casts off the illusion?

M.: The 'I' casts off the illusion of 'I' and yet remains as 'I'. Such is the paradox of Self-Realisation. The realised do not see any contradiction in it. Take the case of *bhakti* – I approach Iswara and pray to be absorbed in Him. I then surrender myself in faith and by concentration. What remains afterwards? In place of the original 'I', perfect self-surrender leaves a residuum of God in which the 'I' is lost. This is the highest form of devotion (*parabhakti*), *prapatti*, surrender or the height of *vairagya*.

You give up this and that of 'my' possessions. If you give up 'I' and 'Mine' instead, all are given up at a stroke. The very seed of possession is lost. Thus the evil is nipped in the bud or crushed in the germ itself. Dispassion (*vairagya*) must be very strong to do this. Eagerness to do it must be equal to that of a man kept under water trying to rise up to the surface for his life.

D.: Cannot this trouble and difficulty be lessened with the aid of a Master or an *Ishta Devata* (God chosen for worship)? Cannot they give the power to see our Self as it is - to change us into themselves - to take us into Self-Realisation?

M.: *Ishta Devata* and Guru are aids - very powerful aids on this path. But an aid to be effective requires your effort also. Your effort is a *sine qua non*. It is you who should see the sun. Can spectacles and the sun see for you? You yourself have to see your true nature. Not much aid is required for doing it!

D.: What is the relation between my free-will and the overwhelming might of the Omnipotent?

(a) Is omniscience of God consistent with ego's freewill?

(b) Is omnipotence of God consistent with ego's freewill?

(c) Are the natural laws consistent with God's free-will?

M.: Yes. Free-will is the present appearing to a limited faculty of sight and will. The same ego sees its past activity as falling into a course of 'law' or rules - its own free-will being one of the links in that course of law.

Omnipotence and omniscience of God are then seen by the ego to have acted through the appearance of his own free-will. So he comes to the conclusion that the ego must go by appearances. Natural laws are manifestations of God's will and they have been laid down.

D.: Is the study of science, psychology, physiology, philosophy, etc. helpful for:-

(1) this art of yoga-liberation.

(2) the intuitive grasp of the unity of the Real?

M.: Very little. Some knowledge is needed for yoga and it may be found in books. But practical application is the thing needed, and personal example, personal touch and personal instructions are the most helpful aids. As for the other, a person may laboriously convince himself of the truth to be intuited, *i.e.*, its function and nature, but the actual intuition is akin to feeling and requires practice and personal contact. Mere book learning is not of any great use. After realisation all intellectual loads are useless burdens and are thrown overboard as jetsam. Jettisoning the ego is necessary and natural.

D.: How does dream differ from waking?

M.: In dreams one takes on different bodies, and they re-enter this body when one dreams of sense-contacts.

D.: What is happiness? Is it inhering in the Atman or in the object, or in the contact between the subject and the object? But we do not see happiness in our affairs. When does It actually arise?

M.: When there is contact of a desirable sort or memory thereof, and when there is freedom from undesirable contacts or memory thereof, we say there is happiness. Such happiness is relative and is better called pleasure.

But men want absolute and permanent happiness. This does not reside in objects, but in the Absolute. It is Peace free from pain and pleasure - it is a neutral state.

D.: In what sense is happiness our real nature?

M.: Perfect Bliss is Brahman. Perfect Peace is of the Self. That alone exists and is conscious. The same conclusion is arrived at: (a) judged metaphysically, and (b) inferred by *Bhakti Marga* (Path of Devotion).

We pray to God for Bliss and receive it by Grace. The bestower of bliss must be Bliss itself and also Infinite. Therefore, *Iswara* is the Personal God of infinite power and bliss. Brahman is Bliss, impersonal and absolute. The finite egos, deriving their source from Brahman and then *Iswara*, are in their spiritual nature bliss only. Biologically, an organism functions because such functions are attended with happiness.

It is pleasure that helps our growth; food, exercise, rest, and gregarious qualities. The psychology (and metaphysics) of pleasure is perhaps this; Our nature is primarily one, entire, blissful. Take this as a probable hypothesis. Creation is by the entire Godhead breaking into God and Nature (*maya* or *prakriti*). This *maya* is of two parts: (*para*) - the supporting essence and (*apara*) the five elements, mind, intellect, and ego (eight-fold).

Ego's perfection is suddenly broken at a point and a want is felt giving rise to a desire to get something or do something. When that want is cured by the fulfilment of that desire, the ego is happy and the original perfection is restored. Therefore happiness may be said to be our natural condition or nature. Pleasure and pain are relative and refer to our finite state, with progress by satisfaction of want. If relative progress is stopped and the soul merges into Brahman - of the nature of perfect peace - that soul ceases to have relative, temporary pleasure and enjoys perfect peace - Bliss. Hence Self-Realisation is Bliss; it is realizing the Self as the limitless spiritual eye (*jnana dristi*) and not clairvoyance; it is the highest self-surrender. *Samsara* (the world-cycle) is sorrow.

D.: Why then is *samsara* - creation and manifestation as finitised - so full of sorrow and evil?

M.: God's will!

D.: Why does God will it so?

M.: It is inscrutable. No motive can be attributed to that Power - no desire, no end to achieve can be asserted of that one Infinite, All-wise and All-powerful Being. God is untouched by activities, which take place in His presence; compare the sun and the world activities. There is no meaning in attributing responsibility and motive to the One before it becomes many. But God's will for the prescribed course of events is a good solution of the free-will problem (*vexata quaestio*). If the mind is restless on account of a sense of the imperfect and unsatisfactory character of what befalls us or what is committed or omitted by us, then it is wise to drop the sense of responsibility and free-will by regarding ourselves as the ordained

instruments of the All-wise and All-powerful, to do and suffer as He pleases. He carries all burdens and gives us peace.

27. *D.*: How are they practised?

M.: An examination of the ephemeral nature of external phenomena leads to *vairagya*. Hence enquiry (*vichara*) is the first and foremost step to be taken. When *vichara* continues automatically, it results in a contempt for wealth, fame, ease, pleasure, etc. The 'I' thought becomes clearer for inspection. The source of 'I' is the Heart - the final goal. If, however, the aspirant is not temperamentally suited to *Vichara Marga* (to the introspective analytical method), he must develop *bhakti* (devotion) to an ideal - may be God, Guru, humanity in general, ethical laws, or even the idea of beauty. When one of these takes possession of the individual, other attachments grow weaker, *i.e.*, dispassion (*vairagya*) develops. Attachment for the ideal simultaneously grows and finally holds the field. Thus *ekagrata* (concentration) grows simultaneously and imperceptibly - with or without visions and direct aids.

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M.: (a) Existence without beginning or end - eternal.

(b) Existence everywhere, endless, infinite.

(c) Existence underlying all forms, all changes, all forces, all matter and all spirit.

The many change and pass away (phenomena), whereas the One always endures (noumenon).

(d) The one displacing the triads, *i.e.*, the knower, the knowledge and the known. The triads are only appearances in time and space, whereas the Reality lies beyond and behind them. They are like a mirage over the Reality. They are the result of delusion.

D.: If 'I' also be an illusion, who then casts off the illusion?

M.: The 'I' casts off the illusion of 'I' and yet remains as 'I'. Such is the paradox of Self-Realisation. The realised do not see any contradiction in it. Take the case of *bhakti* - I approach Iswara and pray to be absorbed in Him. I then surrender myself in faith and by concentration. What remains afterwards? In place of the original 'I', perfect self-surrender

leaves a residuum of God in which the 'I' is lost. This is the highest form of devotion (*parabhakti*), *prapatti*, surrender or the height of *vairagya*.

You give up this and that of 'my' possessions. If you give up 'I' and 'Mine' instead, all are given up at a stroke. The very seed of possession is lost. Thus the evil is nipped in the bud or crushed in the germ itself. Dispassion (*vairagya*) must be very strong to do this. Eagerness to do it must be equal to that of a man kept under water trying to rise up to the surface for his life.

D.: Cannot this trouble and difficulty be lessened with the aid of a Master or an *Ishta Devata* (God chosen for worship)? Cannot they give the power to see our Self as it is - to change us into themselves - to take us into Self-Realisation?

M.: *Ishta Devata* and Guru are aids - very powerful aids on this path. But an aid to be effective requires your effort also. Your effort is a *sine qua non*. It is you who should see the sun. Can spectacles and the sun see for you? You yourself have to see your true nature. Not much aid is required for doing it!

D.: What is the relation between my free-will and the overwhelming might of the Omnipotent?

(a) Is omniscience of God consistent with ego's freewill?

(b) Is omnipotence of God consistent with ego's freewill?

(c) Are the natural laws consistent with God's free-will?

M.: Yes. Free-will is the present appearing to a limited faculty of sight and will. The same ego sees its past activity as falling into a course of 'law' or rules - its own free-will being one of the links in that course of law.

Omnipotence and omniscience of God are then seen by the ego to have acted through the appearance of his own free-will. So he comes to the conclusion that the ego must go by appearances. Natural laws are manifestations of God's will and they have been laid down.

D.: Is the study of science, psychology, physiology, philosophy, etc. helpful for:-

(1) this art of yoga-liberation.

(2) the intuitive grasp of the unity of the Real?

M.: Very little. Some knowledge is needed for yoga and it may be found in books. But practical application is the thing needed, and personal example, personal touch and personal instructions are the most helpful aids. As for the other, a person may laboriously convince himself of the truth to be intuited, *i.e.*, its function and nature, but the actual intuition is akin to feeling and requires practice and personal contact. Mere book learning is not of any great

use. After realisation all intellectual loads are useless burdens and are thrown overboard as jetsam. Jettisoning the ego is necessary and natural.

D.: How does dream differ from waking?

M.: In dreams one takes on different bodies, and they re-enter this body when one dreams of sense-contacts.

D.: What is happiness? Is it inhering in the Atman or in the object, or in the contact between the subject and the object? But we do not see happiness in our affairs. When does It actually arise?

M.: When there is contact of a desirable sort or memory thereof, and when there is freedom from undesirable contacts or memory thereof, we say there is happiness. Such happiness is relative and is better called pleasure.

But men want absolute and permanent happiness. This does not reside in objects, but in the Absolute. It is Peace free from pain and pleasure - it is a neutral state.

D.: In what sense is happiness our real nature?

M.: Perfect Bliss is Brahman. Perfect Peace is of the Self. That alone exists and is conscious. The same conclusion is arrived at: (a) judged metaphysically, and (b) inferred by *Bhakti Marga* (Path of Devotion).

We pray to God for Bliss and receive it by Grace. The bestower of bliss must be Bliss itself and also Infinite. Therefore, *Iswara* is the Personal God of infinite power and bliss. Brahman is Bliss, impersonal and absolute. The finite egos, deriving their source from Brahman and then *Iswara*, are in their spiritual nature bliss only. Biologically, an organism functions because such functions are attended with happiness.

It is pleasure that helps our growth; food, exercise, rest, and gregarious qualities. The psychology (and metaphysics) of pleasure is perhaps this; Our nature is primarily one, entire, blissful. Take this as a probable hypothesis. Creation is by the entire Godhead breaking into God and Nature (*maya* or *prakriti*). This *maya* is of two parts: (*para*) - the supporting essence and (*apara*) the five elements, mind, intellect, and ego (eight-fold).

Ego's perfection is suddenly broken at a point and a want is felt giving rise to a desire to get something or do something. When that want is cured by the fulfilment of that desire, the ego is happy and the original perfection is restored. Therefore happiness may be said to be our natural condition or nature. Pleasure and pain are relative and refer to our finite state, with progress by satisfaction of want. If relative progress is stopped and the soul merges into Brahman - of the nature of perfect peace - that soul ceases to have relative, temporary pleasure and enjoys perfect peace - Bliss. Hence Self-Realisation is Bliss; it is realizing the

Self as the limitless spiritual eye (*jnana dristi*) and not clairvoyance; it is the highest self-surrender. *Samsara* (the world-cycle) is sorrow.

D.: Why then is *samsara* - creation and manifestation as finitised - so full of sorrow and evil?

M.: God's will!

D.: Why does God will it so?

M.: It is inscrutable. No motive can be attributed to that Power - no desire, no end to achieve can be asserted of that one Infinite, All-wise and All-powerful Being. God is untouched by activities, which take place in His presence; compare the sun and the world activities. There is no meaning in attributing responsibility and motive to the One before it becomes many. But God's will for the prescribed course of events is a good solution of the free-will problem (*vexata quaestio*). If the mind is restless on account of a sense of the imperfect and unsatisfactory character of what befalls us or what is committed or omitted by us, then it is wise to drop the sense of responsibility and free-will by regarding ourselves as the ordained instruments of the All-wise and All-powerful, to do and suffer as He pleases. He carries all burdens and gives us peace.

Talk 29

29. On another occasion, the evening was calm and cloudy. It was drizzling occasionally and somewhat cool in consequence. The windows of the Asramam Hall were closed and Maharshi was seated as usual on the sofa. Facing him sat the devotees. Some visitors had come from Cuddalore. A Sub-Judge, accompanied by two elderly ladies, was among them. The Sub-Judge began the discussion as to the impermanence of all mundane things, by putting the question. "Has the discrimination between Reality and Unreality (*Sat asat vicharana*) the efficacy in itself to lead us to the realisation of the one Imperishable?"

M.: As propounded by all and realised by all true seekers, fixity in the Supreme Spirit (*Brahma nishta*) alone can make us know and realise it. It being of us and in us, any amount of discrimination (*vivechana*) can lead us only one step forward, by making us renouncers, by goading us to discard the seeming (*abhasa*) as transitory and to hold fast to the eternal truth and presence alone.

The conversation turned upon the question as to whether *Iswara Prasad* (Divine Grace) is necessary for the attaining of *samrajya* (universal dominion) or whether a *jiva's* honest and

strenuous efforts to attain it cannot of themselves lead him to That from whence is no return to life and death. The Maharshi with an ineffable smile which lit up His Holy Face and which was all-pervasive, shining upon the coterie around him, replied in tones of certainty and with the ring of truth; “Divine Grace is essential for Realisation. It leads one to God-realisation. But such Grace is vouchsafed only to him who is a true devotee or a yogin, who has striven hard and ceaselessly on the path towards freedom.”

D.: There are six centres mentioned in the Yoga books; but the *jiva* is said to reside in the Heart. Is it not so?

M.: Yes. The *jiva* is said to remain in the Heart in deep sleep; and in the brain in the waking state. The Heart need not be taken to be the muscular cavity with four chambers which propels blood. There are indeed passages which support the view. There are others who take it to mean a set of ganglia or nerve centres about that region. Whichever view is correct does not matter to us. We are not concerned with anything less than ourselves. That we have certainly within us. There could be no doubts or discussions about that.

The Heart is used in the Vedas and the scriptures to denote the place whence the notion ‘I’ springs. Does it spring only from the fleshy ball? It springs within us somewhere right in the middle of our being. The ‘I’ has no location. Everything is the Self. There is nothing but that. So the Heart must be said to be the entire body of ourselves and of the entire universe, conceived as ‘I’. But to help the practiser (*abhyasi*) we have to indicate a definite part of the Universe, or of the Body. So this Heart is pointed out as the seat of the Self. But in truth we are everywhere, we are all that is, and there is nothing else.

D.: It is said that Divine Grace is necessary to attain successful undistracted mind (*samadhi*). Is that so?

M.: We are God (*Iswara*). *Iswara Drishti* (i.e., seeing ourselves as God) is itself Divine Grace. So we need Divine Grace to get God’s Grace.

Maharshi smiles and all devotees laugh together.

D.: There is also Divine Favour (*Iswara anugraham*) as distinct from Divine Grace (*Iswara prasadam*). Is that so?

M.: The thought of God is Divine Favour! He is by nature Grace (*prasad* or *arul*). It is by God’s Grace that you think of God.

D.: Is not the Master’s Grace the result of God’s Grace?

M.: Why distinguish between the two? The Master is the same as God and not different from him.

D.: When an endeavour is made to lead the right life and to concentrate thought on the Self, there is often a downfall and break. What is to be done?

M.: It will come all right in the end. There is the steady impulse of your determination that sets you on your feet again after every downfall and breakdown. Gradually the obstacles are all overcome and your current becomes stronger. Everything comes right in the end. Steady determination is what is required.

78. A man from Masulla asked the Master: "How to realise the Self?"

M.: Everyone has experience of the Self every moment of his life.

D.: But the Self is not realised as one would like.

M.: Yes. The present experience is *viparita* - different from real. What is not is confounded with what is.

D.: How to find the Atman?

M.: There is no investigation into the Atman. The investigation can only be into the non-self. Elimination of the non-self is alone possible. The Self being always self evident will shine forth of itself.

The Self is called by different names - Atman, God, *Kundalini*, *mantra*, etc. Hold any one of them and the Self becomes manifest. God is no other than the Self. *Kundalini* is now showing forth as the mind. When the mind is traced to its source it is *Kundalini*. *Mantra japa* leads to elimination of other thoughts and to concentration on the *mantra*. The *mantra* finally merges into the Self and shines forth as the Self.

D.: How long is a Guru necessary for Self-Realisation?

M.: Guru is necessary so long as there is the *laghu*. (Pun on Guru = heavy; *laghu* = light). *Laghu* is due to the self-imposed but wrong limitation of the Self. God, on being worshipped, bestows steadiness in devotion which leads to surrender. On the devotee surrendering, God shows His mercy by manifesting as the Guru. The Guru, otherwise God, guides the devotee, saying that God is in you and He is the Self. This leads to introversion of the mind and finally to realisation.

Effort is necessary up to the state of realisation. Even then the Self should spontaneously become evident. Otherwise happiness will not be complete. Up to that state of spontaneity there must be effort in some form or another.

D.: Our work-a-day life is not compatible with such efforts.

M.: Why do you think that you are active? Take the gross example of your arrival here. You left home in a cart, took train, alighted at the Railway Station here, got into a cart there and found yourself in this Asramam. When asked, you say that you travelled here all the way from your town. Is it true? Is it not a fact that you remained as you were and there were movements of conveyances all along the way. Just as those movements are confounded with your own, so also the other activities. They are not your own. They are God's activities.

D.: Such idea will lead to blankness of mind and the work will not progress well.

M.: Go up to that blankness and tell me afterwards.

D.: They say that a visit to Sages helps Self-Realisation?

M.: Yes. So it does.

D.: Will not my present visit to you bring it about?

M.: (After a short pause) What is to be brought about? To whom? Consider; investigate. To whom is this doubt. If the source is traced the doubt will disappear.

79. An engineer asked: "The animals seem to conform to their own natural laws in spite of their environment and changes. Whereas man flouts social law and is not bound by any definite system. He seems to be degenerating whereas the animals are steady. Is it not so?"

M.: (After a long time). The Upanishads and scriptures say that human beings are only animals unless they are realised beings. Possibly they are worse also.

29th September, 1935

Talk 76

Mr. K. S. N. Iyer said that he was not convinced how spiritual life could be reconciled to worldly activities. The Master in answer cited some verses from *Yoga Vasishtha*. (The original is said to be millions of verses, of which only 32,000 stanzas are now found in the Sanskrit text. It was condensed to 6,000 and called *Laghu Vasishtha*. The latter has been rendered in Tamil in 2,050 stanzas).

D.: Without the mind concentrating on it the work cannot be performed satisfactorily. How is the mind to be spiritually disposed and the work kept going as well?

M.: The mind is only a projection from the Self, appearing in the waking state. In deep sleep, you do not say whose son you are and so on. As soon as you wake up you say you are so and so, and recognise the world and so on. The world is only *lokah*, *lokah* = *lokyate iti lokah* (what is perceived is the world). That which is seen is *lokah* or the world. Which is the eye that sees it? That is the ego which rises and sinks periodically. But you exist always. Therefore That which lies beyond the ego is consciousness - the Self.

In deep sleep mind is merged and not destroyed. That which merges reappears. It may happen in meditation also. But the mind which is destroyed cannot reappear. The yogi's aim must be to destroy it and not to sink in *laya*. In the peace of *dhyana*, *laya* ensues but it is not enough. It must be supplemented by other practices for destroying the mind. Some people have gone into *samadhi* with a trifling thought and after a long time awakened in the trail of the same thought. In the meantime generations have passed away in the world. Such a *yogi* has not destroyed his mind. Its destruction is the non-recognition of it as being apart from the Self. Even now the mind *is not*. Recognise it. How can you do it if not in everyday activities. They go on automatically. Know that the mind promoting them is not real but a phantom proceeding from the Self. That is how the mind is destroyed.

Talk 78

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Talk 79

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M.: (After a long time). The Upanishads and scriptures say that human beings are only animals unless they are realised beings. Possibly they are worse also.

13th November, 1935

Talk 96

Maj. A. W. Chadwick: Of what nature is the realisation of Westerners who relate that they have had flashes of cosmic consciousness?

M.: It came as a flash and disappeared as such. That which has a beginning must also end. Only when the ever-present consciousness is realised will it be permanent. Consciousness is indeed always with us. Everyone knows 'I am!' No one can deny his own being. The man in deep slumber is not aware; while awake he seems to be aware. But it is the same person. There is no change in the one who slept and the one who is now awake. In deep sleep he was not aware of his body; there was no body-consciousness. In the wakeful state he is aware of his body; there is body-consciousness. Therefore the difference lies in the emergence of body-consciousness and not in any change in the Real Consciousness. The body and body-consciousness arise together and sink together. All this amounts to saying that there are no limitations in deep sleep, whereas there are limitations in the waking state. These limitations are the bondage; the feeling 'The body is I' is the error. This false sense of 'I' must go. The real 'I' is always there. It is *here and now*. It never appears anew and disappears again. That which is must also persist for ever. That which appears anew will also be lost. Compare deep sleep and waking. The body appears in one state but not in the other. Therefore the body will be lost. The consciousness was pre-existent and will survive the body. In fact, there is no one who does not say 'I am'. The wrong knowledge of 'I am the body' is the cause of all the mischief. This wrong knowledge must go. That is Realisation. Realisation is not acquisition of anything new nor it is a new faculty. It is only removal of all camouflage.

Maj. Chadwick: I try to shake off the body.

M.: A man shakes off his clothes and remains alone and free. The Self is unlimited and is not confined to the body. How can the body be shaken off? Where will he leave it? Wherever it is, it is his still.

Maj. Chadwick: (Laughter.)

M.: The ultimate Truth is so simple. It is nothing more than being in the pristine state. This is all that need be said.

Still, it is a wonder that to teach this simple Truth there should come into being so many religions, creeds, methods and disputes among them and so on! Oh the pity! Oh the pity!

Maj. Chadwick: But people will not be content with simplicity; they want complexity.

M.: Quite so. Because they want something elaborate and attractive and puzzling, so many religions have come into existence and each of them is so complex and each creed in each religion has its own adherents and antagonists.

For example, an ordinary Christian will not be satisfied unless he is told that God is somewhere in the far-off Heavens not to be reached by us unaided. Christ alone knew Him and Christ alone can guide us. Worship Christ and be saved. If told the simple truth - "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you" - he is not satisfied and will read complex and far-fetched meanings in such statements. Mature minds alone can grasp the simple Truth in all its nakedness.

Maj. Chadwick later expressed a certain involuntary fear while meditating. He feels the spirit separated from the gross body and the sensation creates a fright.

M.: To whom is the fright? It is all due to the habit of identifying the body with the Self. Repeated experience of separation will make one familiar and the fright will cease.

28th November, 1935

Talk 105

M.: *Yena asrutam srutam bhavati (Chandogya Upanishad).* (By knowing which, all the unknown becomes known.)

Madhavaswami, Bhagavan's attendant: Are there nine methods of teaching the *Mahavakya 'Tattvamasi'* in the *Chandogya Upanishad*?

M.: No. Not so. The method is only one. Uddalaka started teaching *Sat eva Somya* (There is only Being) illustrating it with Svetaketu's fast.

(1) *Sat*, the Being in the individual, is made obvious by the fast.

(2) This (*sat*) Being is similar in all, as honey gathered from different flowers.

(3) There is no difference in the *sat* of individuals as illustrated by the state of deep sleep.

The question arises - if so, why does not each know it in sleep?

- (4) Because the individuality is lost. There is only *sat* left. Illustration: rivers lost in the ocean. If lost, is there *sat*?
- (5) Surely - as when a tree is pruned it grows again. That is a sure sign of its life. But is it there even in that dormant condition?
- (6) Yes, take the instance of salt and water. The presence of the salt in water is subtle. Though invisible to the eye it is recognised by other senses. How is one to know it? What is the other means?
- (7) By enquiry, as the man left in the Gandhara forest regained his home.
- (8) In evolution and involution, in manifestation and resolution, *sat* alone exists. *Tejah parasyam, devatayam* (the light merges in the Supreme).
- (9) An insincere man is hurt by the touch of fire test. His insincerity is brought out by fire. Sincerity is Self-evident. A true man or a Self realised man remains happy, without being affected by the false appearances (namely the world, birth and death, etc.), whereas the false or ignorant man is miserable.

29th November, 1935

Talk 106

Swami Yogananda with four others arrived at 8.45 a.m. He looks big, but gentle and well-groomed. He has dark flowing hair, hanging over his shoulders. The group had lunch in the Asramam.

Mr. C. R. Wright, his secretary, asked: How shall I realise God?

M.: God is an unknown entity. Moreover He is external. Whereas, the Self is always with you and it is you. Why do you leave out what is intimate and go in for what is external?

D.: What is this Self again?

M.: The Self is known to everyone but not clearly. You always exist. The Be-ing is the Self. 'I am' is the name of God. Of all the definitions of God, none is indeed so well put as the Biblical statement "*I AM THAT I AM*" in EXODUS (Chap. 3). There are other statements, such as *Brahmaivaham, Aham Brahmasmi* and *Soham*. But none is so direct as the name *JEHOVAH = I AM*. The Absolute Being is *what* is - It is the Self. It is God. Knowing the Self, God is known. In fact God is none other than the Self.

D.: Why are there good and evil?

M.: They are relative terms. There must be a subject to know the good and evil. That subject is the ego. Trace the source of the ego. It ends in the Self. The source of the ego is God. This definition of God is probably more concrete and better understood by you.

D.: So it is. How to get Bliss?

M.: Bliss is not something to be got. On the other hand you are always Bliss. This desire is born of the sense of incompleteness. To whom is this sense of incompleteness? Enquire. In deep sleep you were blissful: Now you are not so. What has interposed between that Bliss and this non-bliss? It is the ego. Seek its source and find you are Bliss.

There is nothing new to get. You have, on the other hand, to get rid of your ignorance which makes you think that you are other than Bliss. For whom is this ignorance? It is to the ego. Trace the source of the ego. Then the ego is lost and Bliss remains over. It is eternal. You are That, here and now.... That is the master key for solving all doubts. The doubts arise in the mind. The mind is born of the ego. The ego rises from the Self. Search the source of the ego and the Self is revealed. That alone remains. The universe is only expanded Self. It is not different from the Self.

D.: What is the best way of living?

M.: It differs according as one is a *jnani* or *ajnani*. A *jnani* does not find anything different or separate from the Self. All are in the Self. It is wrong to imagine that there is the world, that there is a body in it and that you dwell in the body. If the Truth is known, the universe and what is beyond it will be found to be only in the Self. The outlook differs according to the sight of the person. The sight is from the eye. The eye must be located somewhere. If you are seeing with the gross eyes you find others gross. If with subtle eyes (*i.e.*, the mind) others appear subtle. If the eye becomes the Self, the Self being infinite, the eye is infinite. There is nothing else to see different from the Self.

He thanked Maharshi. He was told that the best way of thanking is to remain always as the Self.

107. Later the Yogi asked: How is the spiritual uplift of the people to be effected? What are the instructions to be given them?

M.: They differ according to the temperaments of the individuals and according to the spiritual ripeness of their minds. There cannot be any instruction *en masse*.

D.: Why does God permit suffering in the world? Should He not with His omnipotence do away with it at one stroke and ordain the universal realisation of God?

M.: Suffering is the way for Realisation of God.

D.: Should He not ordain differently?

M.: It is the way.

D.: Are Yoga, religion, etc., antidotes to suffering?

M.: They help you to overcome suffering.

D.: Why should there be suffering?

M.: Who suffers? What is suffering?

No answer! Finally the Yogi rose up, prayed for Sri Bhagavan's blessings for his own work and expressed great regret for his hasty return. He looked very sincere and devoted and even emotional.

14th December, 1935

Talk 110

An American lady asked Bhagavan what his experiences of *samadhi* were. When suggested that she should relate her experiences and ask if they were right, she replied that Sri Bhagavan's experiences ought to be correct and should be known, whereas her own were unimportant. She thus wanted to know if Sri Bhagavan felt his body hot or cold in *samadhi*, if he spent the first three and a half years of his stay at Tiruvannamalai in prayers and so on.

M.: *Samadhi* transcends mind and speech and cannot be described. For example, the state of deep slumber cannot be described; *samadhi* state can still less be explained.

D.: But I know that I am unconscious in deep sleep.

M.: Consciousness and unconsciousness are only modes of the mind. *Samadhi* transcends the mind.

D.: Still you can say what it is like.

M.: You will know only when you are in *samadhi*.

26th January, 1936

Talk 146

In reply to Miss Leena Sarabhai, a cultured Indian lady of high rank, Sri Bhagavan said: The state of equanimity is the state of bliss. The declaration in the Vedas 'I am This or That', is only an aid to gain equanimity of mind.

D.: So, it is wrong to begin with a goal: is it?

M.: If there be a goal to be reached it cannot be permanent. The goal must already be there. We seek to reach the goal with the ego, but the goal exists before the ego. What is in the goal is even prior to our birth, *i.e.*, to the birth of the ego. Because we exist the ego appears to exist too.

If we look on the Self as the ego then we become the ego, if as the mind we become the mind, if as the body we become the body. It is the thought which builds up sheaths in so many ways. The shadow on the water is found to be shaking. Can anyone stop the shaking of the shadow? If it should cease to shake you would not notice the water but only the light. Similarly to take no notice of the ego and its activities, but see only the light behind. The ego is the I-thought. The true 'I' is the Self.

D.: It is one step to realisation.

M.: Realisation is already there. The state free from thoughts is the only real state. There is no such action as Realisation. Is there anyone who is not realising the Self? Does anyone deny his own existence? Speaking of realisation, it implies two selves - the one to realise, the other to be realised. What is not already realised, is sought to be realised. Once we admit our existence, how is it that we do not know our Self?

D.: Because of the thoughts - the mind.

M.: Quite so. It is the mind that stands between and veils our happiness. How do we know that we exist? If you say because of the world around us, then how do you know that you existed in deep sleep?

D.: How to get rid of the mind?

M.: Is it the mind that wants to kill itself? The mind cannot kill itself. So your business is to find the real nature of the mind. Then you will know that there is no mind. When the Self is sought, the mind is nowhere. Abiding in the Self, one need not worry about the mind.

D.: How to get rid of fear?

M.: What is fear? It is only a thought. If there is anything besides the Self there is reason to fear. Who sees the second (anything external)? First the ego arises and sees objects as external. If the ego does not rise, the Self alone exists and there is no second (nothing

external). For anything external to oneself implies the seer within. Seeking it there will arise no doubt, no fear - not only fear, all other thoughts centred round the ego will disappear along with it.

D.: This method seems to be quicker than the usual one of cultivating qualities alleged necessary for salvation (*sadhana chatushtaya*)?

M.: Yes. All bad qualities centre round the ego. When the ego is gone Realisation results by itself. There are neither good nor bad qualities in the Self. The Self is free from all qualities. Qualities pertain to the mind only. It is beyond quality. If there is unity, there will also be duality. The numeral one gives rise to other numbers. The truth is neither one nor two. IT is as it is.

D.: The difficulty is to be in the thought-free state.

M.: Leave the thought-free state to itself. Do not think of it as pertaining to you. Just as when you walk, you involuntarily take steps, so too in your actions; but the thought-free state is not affected by your actions.

D.: What is it that is discriminative in action?

M.: Discrimination will be automatic, intuitive.

D.: So Intuition alone matters; Intuition develops also.

M.: Those who have discovered great Truths have done so in the still depths of the Self.

The ego is like one's shadow thrown on the ground. If one attempts to bury it, it will be foolish. The Self is only one. If limited it is the ego. If unlimited it is Infinite and is the Reality.

The bubbles are different from one another and numerous, but the ocean is only one. Similarly the egos are many, whereas the Self is one and only one.

When told that you are not the ego, realise the Reality. Why do you still identify yourself with the ego? It is like saying, "Don't think of the monkey while taking medicine" - it is impossible. Similarly it happens with common folk. When the Reality is mentioned why do you continue to meditate *Sivoham* or *Aham Brahmasmi*? The significance must be traced and understood. It is not enough to repeat the bare words or think of them.

Reality is simply the loss of the ego. Destroy the ego by seeking its identity. Because the ego is no entity it will automatically vanish and Reality will shine forth by itself. This is the direct method. Whereas all other methods are done, only retaining the ego. In those paths there arise so many doubts and the eternal question remains to be tackled finally. But in this method the final question is the only one and it is raised from the very beginning. No *sadhanas* are necessary for engaging in this quest.

There is no greater mystery than this - viz., ourselves being the Reality we seek to gain reality. We think that there is something hiding our Reality and that it must be destroyed before the Reality is gained. It is ridiculous. A day will dawn when you will yourself laugh at your past efforts. That which will be on the day you laugh is also here and now.

D.: So it is a great game of pretending?

M.: Yes.

In *Yoga Vasishtha* it is said, “What is Real is hidden from us, but what is false, is revealed as true.” We are actually experiencing the Reality only; still, we do not know it. Is it not a wonder of wonders?

The quest “Who am I?” is the axe with which to cut off the ego.

5th February, 1936

Talk 154

The next day he asked about *pranayama*.

M.: *Pranayama* according to *jnana* is:

“ <i>Na aham</i> ”	I am not this	= out-breathing
“ <i>Koham</i> ”	Who am I?	= in-breathing
“ <i>Soham</i> ”	I am He	= Retention of breath

This is *vichara*. This *vichara* brings about the desired result.

For one not so advanced as to engage in it, some meditation brings about suspension of breath and the mind ceases to be restless. Control of mind spontaneously effects control of breath; rather *kevala kumbhaka* (spontaneous retention of breath, without attention to inhalation or exhalation) results.

For one unable to do this also, regulation of breath is prescribed for making the mind quiescent. Quiescence lasts only so long as the breath is controlled. So it is transient. The goal is clearly not *pranayama*. It extends on to *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*. Those stages deal with the control of mind. Such control becomes easier for the man who had earlier practised *pranayama*. *Pranayama* leads him to the higher stages involving control of mind. Therefore control of mind is the aim of yoga also.

A more advanced man will naturally go direct to control of mind without wasting his time in practising control of breath. A simple development of *pranayama* alone may confer *siddhis* which so many hanker for.

When asked if there are any food restrictions, Sri Bhagavan said: “*Mita hita bhuk*” - agreeable food in moderate quantity. When asked about the efficacy of *bhakti*, Sri Bhagavan said: So long as there is *vibhakti*, there must be *bhakti*. So long as there is *viyoga*, there must be *yoga*. So long as there is duality, there must be God and devotee. Similarly also in *vichara*. So long as there is *vichara*, there is duality too. But merging into the Source there is unity only. So it is with *bhakti* too. Realising the God of devotion, there will be unity only. God too is thought of in and by the Self. So God is identical with the Self. If one is told to have *bhakti* for God and he does so straightaway, it is all right. But there is another kind of man who turns round and says: “There are two, I and God. Before knowing the far-off God, let me know the more immediate and intimate ‘I.’” For him the *vichara-marga* has to be taught. There is in fact no difference between *bhakti* and *vichara*.

18th June, 1936

Talk 208

It is enough that one surrenders oneself. Surrender is to give oneself up to the original cause of one's being. Do not delude yourself by imagining such source to be some God outside you. One's source is within yourself. Give yourself up to it. That means that you should seek the source and merge in it. Because you imagine yourself to be out of it, you raise the question “Where is the source?” Some contend that the sugar cannot taste its own sweetness and that a taster must taste and enjoy it. Similarly, an individual cannot be the Supreme and enjoy the Bliss of that state; therefore the individuality must be maintained on the one hand and God-head on the other so that enjoyment may result! Is God insentient like sugar? How can one surrender oneself and yet retain one's individuality for supreme enjoyment? Furthermore they say also that the soul, reaching the divine region and remaining there, serves the Supreme Being. Can the sound of the word “service” deceive the Lord? Does He not know? Is He waiting for these people's service? Would not He - the Pure Consciousness - ask in turn: “Who are you apart from Me that presume to serve Me?”

Still more, they assume that the individual soul becomes pure by being divested of the ego and fit for being the body of the Lord. Thus the Lord is the Spirit and the purified souls constitute His body and limbs! Can there be a soul for the souls? How many souls are there? The answer must be, "There are many individual souls and One Supreme Soul." What is soul in that case? It cannot be the body, etc. What remains over after all these are eliminated must be said to be the soul. Thus even after realising the soul as that which cannot be discarded, the Supreme Soul must be known to exist. In that case, how was the soul realised to be the ultimate reality after discarding all that was alien to it? Should this be right, the soul which was described as that inalienable reality is not the true soul. All such confusion is due to the word 'soul' (atma). The same word atma is used to signify the body, the senses, the mind, the vital principle, the individual soul and the Supreme Being. This wide application of the word has given rise to the idea that the individual soul (*jivatma*), goes to constitute the body of the Supreme (*Paramatma*). "I, O Arjuna! am the *Self*, seated in the heart of all beings; ..." (Bhagavad Gita, X-20). The stanza shows that the Lord is the Atma (Self) of all beings. Does it say, "the Self of the selves"? If, on the other hand, you merge in the Self there will be no individuality left. You will become the Source itself. In that case what is surrender? Who is to surrender what and to whom? This constitutes devotion, wisdom, and investigation.

Among the Vaishnavites too, Saint Nammalvar says, "I was in a maze, sticking to 'I' and 'mine'; I wandered without knowing my Self. On realising my Self I understand that I myself am You and that 'mine' (*i.e.*, my possessions) is only You."

Thus - you see - Devotion is nothing more than knowing oneself. The school of Qualified Monism also admits it. Still, adhering to their traditional doctrine, they persist in affirming that the individuals are part of the Supreme - his limbs as it were. Their traditional doctrine says also that the individual soul should be made pure and then surrendered to the Supreme; then the ego is lost and one goes to the regions of Vishnu after one's death; then finally there is the enjoyment of the Supreme (or the Infinite)!

To say that one is apart from the Primal Source is itself a pretension; to add that one divested of the ego becomes pure and yet retains individuality only to enjoy or serve the Supreme, is a deceitful stratagem. What duplicity is this - first to appropriate what is really His, and then pretend to experience or serve Him! Is not all this already known to Him?

20th June, 1936

Talk 213

Mr. B. C. Das asked why the mind cannot be turned inward in spite of repeated attempts.

M.: It is done by practice and dispassion and that succeeds only gradually. The mind, having been so long a cow accustomed to graze stealthily on others' estates, is not easily confined to her stall. However much her keeper tempts her with luscious grass and fine fodder, she refuses the first time; then she takes a bit; but her innate tendency to stray away asserts itself; and she slips away; on being repeatedly tempted by the owner, she accustoms herself to the stall; finally even if let loose she would not stray away. Similarly with the mind. If once it finds its inner happiness it will not wander outward.

Talk 214

Mr. Eknatha Rao, a frequent visitor, asked: Are there not modulations in contemplation according to circumstances?

M.: Yes. There are; at times there is illumination and then contemplation is easy; at other times contemplation is impossible even with repeated attempts. This is due to the working of the three Gunas (qualities in nature).

D.: Is it influenced by one's activities and circumstances?

M.: Those cannot influence it. It is the sense of doership - *kartrutva buddhi* - that forms the impediment.

8th September, 1936

Talk 246

Language is only a medium for communicating one's thoughts to another. It is called in only after thoughts arise; other thoughts arise after the 'I-thought' rises; the 'I-thought' is the root of all conversation. When one remains without thinking one understands another by means of the universal language of silence.

Silence is ever-speaking; it is a perennial flow of language; it is interrupted by speaking. These words obstruct that mute language. There is electricity flowing in a wire. With

resistance to its passage, it glows as a lamp or revolves as a fan. In the wire it remains as electric energy. Similarly also, silence is the eternal flow of language, obstructed by words. What one fails to know by conversation extending to several years can be known in a trice in Silence, or in front of Silence - *e.g.*, Dakshinamurti, and his four disciples. That is the highest and most effective language.

Talk 247

There arose a doubt if 'I-I' consciousness be the same as *nirvikalpa samadhi* or anything anterior to it.

Sri Bhagavan said that the tiny hole in the Heart remains always closed, but it is opened by *vichara* with the result that 'I' consciousness shines forth. It is the same as *samadhi*.

D.: What is the difference between fainting and sleep?

M.: Sleep is sudden and overpowers the person forcibly. A faint is slower and there is a tingle of resistance kept up. Realisation is possible in a faint and impossible in sleep.

D.: What is the state just before death?

M.: When a person gasps for breath it indicates that the person is unconscious of this body; another body has been held and the person swings to and fro. While gasping there is a more violent gasp at intervals and that indicates the oscillation between the two bodies due to the present attachment not having been completely snapped. I noticed it in the case of my mother and of Palaniswami.

D.: Does the new body involved in that state represent the next re-incarnation of the person?

M.: Yes. While gasping the person is in something like a dream, not aware of the present environment.

(It must be remembered that Sri Bhagavan had been with His mother from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. until she passed away. He was all along holding her head with one hand, the other hand placed on her bosom. What does it signify? He Himself said later that there was a struggle between Himself and His mother until her spirit reached the Heart.

Evidently the soul passes through a series of subtle experiences, and Sri Bhagavan's touch generates a current which turns the soul back from its wandering into the Heart.

The *samskaras*, however, persist and a struggle is kept up between the spiritual force set up by His touch and the innate *samskaras*, until the latter are entirely destroyed and the soul is led into the Heart to rest in eternal Peace, which is the same as Liberation.

Its entry into the Heart is signified by a peculiar sensation perceptible to the Mahatma - similar to the tinkling of a bell.

When Maharshi attended on Palaniswami on his death-bed, He took away His hand after the above signal. But Palaniswami's eyes opened immediately, signifying that the spirit had escaped through them, thereby indicating a higher rebirth, but not Liberation. Having once noticed it with Palaniswami, Maharshi continued touching His mother for a few minutes longer - even after the signal of the soul passing into the Heart - and thus ensured her Liberation. This was confirmed by the look of perfect peace and composure on her features).

23rd October, 1936

Talk 273

Dr. Syed asked: I have been reading the *Five Hymns*. I find that the hymns are addressed to Arunachala by you. You are an Advaitin. How do you then address God as a separate Being?

M.: The devotee, God and the Hymns are all the Self.

D.: But you are addressing God. You are specifying this Arunachala Hill as God.

M.: You can identify the Self with the body. Should not the devotee identify the Self with Arunachala?

D.: If Arunachala be the Self why should it be specially picked out among so many other hills? God is everywhere. Why do you specify Him as Arunachala?

M.: What has attracted you from Allahabad to this place? What has attracted all these people around?

D.: Sri Bhagavan.

M.: How was I attracted here? By Arunachala. The Power cannot be denied. Again Arunachala is within and not without. The Self is Arunachala.

D.: Several terms are used in the holy books - *Atman*, *Paramatman*, *Para*, etc. What is the gradation in them?

M.: They mean the same to the user of the words. But they are understood differently by persons according to their development.

D.: But why do they use so many words to mean the same thing?

M.: It is according to circumstances. They all mean the Self. *Para* means 'not relative' or 'beyond the relative', that is to say, the Absolute.

D.: Should I meditate on the right chest in order to meditate on the Heart?

M.: The Heart is not physical. Meditation should not be on the right or the left. Meditation should be on the Self. Everyone knows 'I am'. Who is the 'I'? It will be neither within nor without, neither on the right nor on the left. 'I am' - that is all.

The Heart is the centre from which everything springs. Because you see the world, the body and so on, it is said that there is a centre for these, which is called the Heart. When you are in the Heart, the Heart is known to be neither the centre nor the circumference. There is nothing else. Whose centre could it be?

D.: May I take it that the Self and the non-Self are like substance and its shadow?

M.: Substance and shadow are for the one who sees only the shadow and mistakes it for the substance and sees its shadow also. But there is neither substance nor shadow for the one who is aware only of the Reality.

D.: Buddha, when asked if there is the ego, was silent; when asked if there is no ego, he was silent; asked if there is God, he was silent; asked if there is no God, he was silent. Silence was his answer for all these. *Mahayana* and *Hinayana* schools have both misinterpreted his silence because they say that he was an atheist.

If he was an atheist, why should he have spoken of *nirvana*, of births and deaths, of *karma*, reincarnations and *dharma*? His interpreters are wrong. Is it not so?

M.: You are right.

29th September, 1936

Talk 251

An aristocratic lady looking very intelligent, though pensive, asked: "We had heard of you, Maharajji, as the kindest and noblest soul. We had long desired to have your *darsan*. I came here once before, on the 14th of last month, but could not remain in your holy presence as long as I wished. Being a woman and also young, I could not stand the people around, and so broke away hurriedly after asking one or two simple questions. There are no holy men like you in our part of the country. I am happy as I have every thing I want. But I do not have that

peace of mind which brings happiness. I now come here seeking your blessing so that I may gain it.”

M.: *Bhakti* fulfils your desire.

D.: I want to know how I can gain that peace of mind. Kindly be pleased to advise me.

M.: Yes - devotion and surrender.

D.: Am I worthy of being a devotee?

M.: Everyone can be a devotee. Spiritual fare is common to all and never denied to anyone - be the person old or young, male or female.

D.: That is exactly what I am anxious to know. I am young and a *grihini* (housewife). There are duties of *grihastha dharma* (the household). Is devotion consistent with such a position?

M.: Certainly. What are you? You are not the body. You are Pure Consciousness. *Grihastha dharma* and the world are only phenomena appearing on that Pure Consciousness. It remains unaffected. What prevents you from being your own Self?

D.: Yes I am already aware of the line of teaching of Maharshi. It is the quest for the Self. But my doubt persists if such quest is compatible with *grihastha* life.

M.: The Self is always there. It is you. There is nothing but you. Nothing can be apart from you. The question of compatibility or otherwise does not arise.

D.: I shall be more definite. Though a stranger, I am obliged to confess the cause of my anxiety. I am blessed with children. A boy - a good *brahmachari* - passed away in February. I was grief-stricken. I was disgusted with this life. I want to devote myself to spiritual life. But my duties as a *grihini* do not permit me to lead a retired life. Hence my doubt.

M.: Retirement means abidance in the Self. Nothing more. It is not leaving one set of surroundings and getting entangled in another set, nor even leaving the concrete world and becoming involved in a mental world.

The birth of the son, his death, etc., are seen in the Self only.

Recall the state of sleep. Were you aware of anything happening? If the son or the world be real, should they not be present with you in sleep? You cannot deny your existence in sleep. Nor can you deny you were happy then. You are the same person now speaking and raising doubts. You are not happy, according to you. But you were happy in sleep. What has transpired in the meantime that happiness of sleep has broken down? It is the rise of ego. That is the new arrival in the *jagrat* state. There was no ego in sleep. The birth of the ego is called the birth of the person. There is no other kind of birth. Whatever is born is bound to die. Kill the ego: there is no fear of recurring death for what is once dead. The Self remains even after the death of the ego. That is Bliss - that is Immortality.

D.: How is that to be done?

M.: See for whom these doubts exist. Who is the doubter? Who is the thinker? That is the ego. Hold it. The other thoughts will die away. The ego is left pure; see where from the ego arises. That is pure consciousness.

D.: It seems difficult. May we proceed by *bhakti marga*?

M.: It is according to individual temperament and equipment. *Bhakti* is the same as *vichara*.

D.: I mean meditation, etc.

M.: Yes. Meditation is on a form. That will drive away other thoughts. The one thought of God will dominate others. That is concentration. The object of meditation is thus the same as that of *vichara*.

D.: Do we not see God in concrete form?

M.: Yes. God is seen in the mind. The concrete form may be seen. Still it is only in the devotee's mind. The form and appearance of God-manifestation are determined by the mind of the devotee. But it is not the finality. There is the sense of duality.

It is like a dream-vision. After God is perceived, *vichara* commences. That ends in Realisation of the Self. *Vichara* is the ultimate route.

Of course, a few find *vichara* practicable. Others find *bhakti* easier.

D.: Did not Mr. Brunton find you in London? Was it only a dream?

M.: Yes. He had the vision. He saw me in his mind.

D.: Did he not see this concrete form?

M.: Yes, still in his mind.

D.: How shall I reach the Self?

M.: There is no reaching the Self. If the Self were to be reached, it would mean that the Self is not now and here, but that it should be got anew. What is got afresh, will also be lost. So it will be impermanent. What is not permanent is not worth striving for. So I say, the Self is not reached. You are the Self. You are already That. The fact is that you are ignorant of your blissful state. Ignorance supervenes and draws a veil over the pure Bliss. Attempts are directed only to remove this ignorance. This ignorance consists in wrong knowledge. The wrong knowledge consists in the false identification of the Self with the body, the mind, etc. This false identity must go and there remains the Self.

D.: How is that to happen?

M.: By enquiry into the Self.

D.: It is difficult. Can I realise the Self, Maharaj? Kindly tell me. It looks so difficult.

M.: You are already the Self. Therefore realisation is common to everyone. Realisation knows no difference in the aspirants. This very doubt, “Can I realise?” or the feeling, “I have not realised” are the obstacles. Be free from these also.

D.: But there should be the experience. Unless I have the experience how can I be free from these afflicting thoughts?

M.: These are also in the mind. They are there because you have identified yourself with the body. If this false identity drops away, ignorance vanishes and Truth is revealed.

D.: Yes, I feel it difficult. There are disciples of Bhagavan who have had His Grace and realised without any considerable difficulty. I too wish to have that Grace. Being a woman and living at a long distance I cannot avail myself of Maharshi’s holy company as much as I would wish and as often as I would. Possibly I may not be able to return. I request Bhagavan’s Grace. When I am back in my place, I want to remember Bhagavan. May Bhagavan be pleased to grant my prayer!

M.: Where are you going? You are not going anywhere. Even supposing you are the body, has your body come from Lucknow to Tiruvannamalai? You had simply sat in the car and one conveyance or another had moved; and finally you say that you have come here. The fact is that you are not the body. The Self does not move. The world moves in it. You are only what you are. There is no change in you. So then even after what looks like departure from here, you are here and there and everywhere. These scenes shift.

As for Grace - Grace is within you. If it is external it is useless. Grace is the Self. You are never out of its operation. Grace is always there.

D.: I mean that when I remember your form, my mind should be strengthened and that response should come from your side too. I should not be left to my individual efforts which are after all only weak.

M.: Grace is the Self. I have already said, “If you remember Bhagavan, you are prompted to do so by the Self.” Is not Grace already there? Is there a moment when Grace is not operating in you? Your remembrance is the forerunner of Grace. That is the response, that is the stimulus, that is the Self and that is Grace.

There is no cause for anxiety.

D.: Can I engage in spiritual practice, even remaining in *samsara*?

M.: Yes, certainly. One ought to do so.

D.: Is not *samsara* a hindrance? Do not all the holy books advocate renunciation?

M.: *Samsara* is only in your mind. The world does not speak out, saying ‘I am the world’. Otherwise, it must be ever there - not excluding your sleep. Since it is not in sleep it is

impermanent. Being impermanent it has no stamina. Having no stamina it is easily subdued by the Self. The Self alone is permanent. Renunciation is non-identification of the Self with the non-self. On the disappearance of ignorance the non-self ceases to exist. That is true renunciation.

D.: Why did you then leave your home in your youth?

M.: That is my *prarabdha* (fate). One's course of conduct in this life is determined by one's *prarabdha*. My *prarabdha* is this way. Your *prarabdha* is that way.

D.: Should I not also renounce?

M.: If that had been your *prarabdha*, the question would not have arisen.

D.: I should therefore remain in the world and engage in spiritual practice. Well, can I get realisation in this life?

M.: This has been already answered. You are always the Self. Earnest efforts never fail. Success is bound to result.

D.: Will Maharshi be pleased to extend Grace to me also!

Maharshi smiled and said "Um! Um!" With blessings and salutation, the interview came to a close and the party departed directly.

26th December, 1936

Talk 306

D.: There is something concrete necessary to meditate upon. How shall we meditate upon 'I'?

M.: We have become rooted in forms and so we require a concrete form for meditating upon. Only that which we contemplate will in the end remain over. When you contemplate the other thoughts disappear. So long as you need to contemplate there are other thoughts, Where are you? You contemplate because you exist. For the contemplator must contemplate. The contemplation can only be where he is. Contemplation wards off all other thoughts. You should merge yourself in the source. At times we merge in the source unconsciously, as in sleep, death, swoon, etc. What is contemplation? It is merging into the source *consciously*. Then the fear of death, of swoon, etc. will disappear, because you are able to merge into the source *consciously*.

Why fear death? Death cannot mean non-being. Why do you love sleep, but not death? Do you not think now? Are you not existing now? Did you not exist in your sleep? Even a child

says that it slept well and happily. It admits its existence in sleep, unconsciously though. So, consciousness is our true nature. We cannot remain unconscious. We however say that we were unconscious in our sleep because we refer to qualified consciousness. The world, the body, etc., are so embedded in us that this relative consciousness is taken to be the Self. Does anyone say in his sleep that he is unconscious? He says so now. This is the state of relative consciousness. Therefore he speaks of relative consciousness and not of abstract consciousness. The consciousness is beyond relative consciousness or unconsciousness.

Again reverting to *Tiruvachagam*, Sri Bhagavan said: All the four foremost saints have given out their experiences in the very first stanza. (1) Undifferentiated worship. (2) Never-failing remembrance. (3) Unrisen thought. (4) The ego is not, the Self is. All mean the same.

D.: But this truth is not realised.

M.: It will be realised in due course. Till then there is devotion (*bhakti*): “Even for a trice you do not leave my mind.” Does he leave you any moment? It is you who allow your mind to wander away. He remains always steady. When your mind is fixed, you say: “He does not leave my mind even for a trice”. How ridiculous!

22nd January, 1937

Talk 336

A certain Vaisya who seems to have studied the Upanishads and Srimad Bhagavad Gita asked some questions:

D.: How to realise the Self?

M.: The Self is always directly perceived. There is no moment when it is not so. How then is it to be ascertained? Find out the Self. You are that.

D.: But it is said the heart-knots are cut away and all doubts end when the Supreme is found. The word *drishti* is used.

M.: To be the Self is the same as seeing the Self. There are no two selves for the one to see the other.

Later, he continued the same question of investigation of the Self.

D.: How to realise the Self?

M.: It is already realised. One should know this simple fact. That is all.

D.: But I do not know it. How shall I know it?

M.: Do you deny your existence?

D.: No: how can that be done?

M.: Then the truth is admitted.

D.: Yet, I do not see. How shall I realise the Self?

M.: Find out who says 'I'.

D.: Yes. I say 'I'.

M.: Who is this 'I'? Is it the body or some one besides the body?

D.: It is not the body. It is someone besides it

M.: Find it out.

D.: I am unable to do it. How shall I find it?

M.: You are now aware of the body. You were not aware of the body in deep sleep. Still you remained in sleep. After waking up you hold the body and say "I cannot realise the Self". Did you say so in your sleep? Because you were undivided (*akhanda*) then, you did not say so. Now that you are contracted within the limits of the body you say "I have not realised". Why do you limit your Self and then feel miserable? Be of your true nature and happy. You did not say 'I' in sleep. You say so now. Why? Because you hold to the body. Find out wherefrom this 'I' comes. Then the Self is realised.

The body being insentient cannot say 'I'. The Self being infinite cannot say 'I' either. Who then says 'I'?

D.: I do not yet understand. How to find the 'I'?

M.: Find out where from this 'I' arises. Then this 'I' will disappear and the infinite Self will remain. This 'I' is only the knot between the sentient and the insentient. The body is not 'I', the Self is not 'I'. Who, then, is the 'I'? Wherefrom does it arise?

D.: Where from *does* it arise?

M.: Find out.

D.: I do not know. Please enlighten me.

M.: It is not from without. It is from within. Where does it come from? If elsewhere you can be led there. Being within, you must find it out yourself.

D.: From the head?

M.: Does the concept of 'head' arise after the 'I' or does 'I' arise from the head? If 'I' be in the head why do you bend it when sleep overpowers you? 'I' is ever constant. So also must its seat be. If the head bends at one time and is erect at another time how can it be the seat of 'I'? Your head is laid flat in sleep. When awake it is raised up. Can it be the 'I'?

D.: Which is it then?

M.: 'I' comes from within. When asleep there is no 'I'. Just before waking there is 'I-thought'.

D.: The heart-knot is said to be between the eyebrows.

M.: Some say "between the eyebrows"; others "at the coccyx", and so on. All these are from the standpoint of the body.

The body comes after the 'I-thought'.

D.: But I cannot divest myself of the body.

M.: So you admit that you are not the body.

D.: If there is pain in this body, I feel it; but not if another body is injured. I cannot get over this body.

M.: This identity is the cause of such feeling. That is the *hrdaya granthi* (heart-knot).

D.: How is this knot to go?

M.: For whom is the knot? Why do you want it to go? Does it ask or do you ask?

D.: It cannot ask; I am asking.

M.: Who is that 'I'? If that is found the knot will not remain.

D.: The knot is concomitant with the body. The body is due to birth. How is rebirth to cease?

M.: Who is born? Is the Self born? Or is it the body?

D.: It is the body.

M.: Then let the body ask how its rebirth may cease.

D.: It will not ask. So I am asking.

M.: Whose is the body? You were without it in your deep sleep. After the 'I-thought' arose the body arose. The first birth is that of 'I-thought'. The body has its birth subsequent to 'I-thought'. So its birth is secondary. Get rid of the primary cause and the secondary one will disappear by itself.

D.: How is that 'I-thought' to be checked from rising?

M.: By Self-quest.

D.: I try to understand but without success. Can I find the Self by means of *japa*? If so, please tell me how.

M.: What *japa*? Why should you make artificial *Japa*? You can find out the eternal and natural *japa* always going on within you.

D.: Some *upadesh* will probably help me.

M.: If I say "Do - Rama, Rama" to one who has not struggled through books like you, he will do it and stick to it. If I say so to one like you who have read much and are investigating

matters, you will not do it for long, because you will think, “Why should I do it? Above all, who am I that should be repeating the *mantra*? Let me find who I am before I proceed further”; and so you will stop *japa* and begin investigation.

D.: It is said: The senses are out-going (*paranchikhani*); inward turned (is) sight (*avrittachakshuh*). What is *avrittachakshuh* (inward-turned sight)?

M.: It does not mean replacement of the eyeball in the opposite direction. What is *chakshuh*?

D.: The eye.

M.: Does the eye see or is it someone behind the eye that sees? If the eye could see, then does a corpse see? The one who is behind the eye sees through the eye. He is meant by the word *chakshuh*.

D.: *Divya chakshuh* is necessary to see the glory of God. This physical eye is the ordinary *chakshuh*.

M.: Oh! I see. You want to see million-sun-splendour and the rest of it!

D.: Can we not see the glory as million-sun-splendour?

M.: Can you see the single sun? Why do you ask for millions of suns?

D.: It must be possible to do so by divine sight. “Where the sun shines not, etc. That is My Supreme abode”. Therefore there is a state where this sun is powerless. That state is that of God.

M.: All right. Find Krishna and the problem is solved.

D.: Krishna is not alive.

M.: Is that what you have learnt from the Gita? Does He not say that He is eternal? Of what are you thinking, His body?

D.: He taught others while alive. Those around Him must have realised. I seek a similar living Guru.

M.: Is Gita then useless after He withdrew His body? Did He speak of His body as Krishna?

Natwewaham jatu nasam ... (Never I was not....)

D.: But I want a living Guru who can say the truth first hand.

M.: The fate of the Guru will be similar to the fate of Krishna.

The questioner retired. Later, Sri Bhagavan said: Divine sight means Self-luminosity. The world *divya* shows it. The full word means the Self. Who is to bestow a divine eye? And who is to see? Again, people read in the books, “hearing, reflection and one-pointedness are necessary”. They think that they must pass through *savikalpa samadhi* and *nirvikalpa samadhi* before attaining Realisation. Hence all these questions. Why should they wander in that maze? What do they gain at the end? It is only cessation of the trouble of seeking. They

find that the Self is eternal and self-evident. Why should they not get that repose even this moment?

A simple man, not learned, is satisfied with *japa* or worship. A *jnani* is of course satisfied. The whole trouble is for the book-worms. Well, well. They will also get on.

Talk 337

Mr K. R. V. Iyer: How is the mind to be purified?

M.: The *sastras* say: “By karma, *bhakti* and so on”. My attendant asked the same question once before. He was told, “By karma dedicated to God”. It is not enough that one thinks of God while doing the karma, but one must continually and unceasingly think of Him. Then alone will the mind become pure.

The attendant applies it to himself and says, “It is not enough that I serve Sri Bhagavan physically. But I must unceasingly remember Him”.

To another person, who asked the same question, Bhagavan said: Quest of the Self, meaning, ‘I am-the-body’ idea must vanish. (*Atma vichara* = disappearance of *dehatma buddhi*)

23rd January, 1937

Talk 338

Mrs. Jennings, an American lady, asked a few questions:

D.: Is not affirmation of God more effective than the quest, “who am I?” Affirmation is positive, whereas the other is negation. Moreover, it indicates separateness.

M.: So long as you seek to know how to realise, this advice is given to find your Self. Your seeking the method denotes your separateness.

D.: Is it not better to say ‘I am the Supreme Being’ than ask ‘Who am I?’

M.: Who affirms? There must be one to do it. Find that one.

D.: Is not meditation better than investigation?

M.: Meditation implies mental imagery, whereas investigation is for the Reality. The former is objective, whereas the latter is subjective.

D.: There must be a scientific approach to this subject.

M.: To eschew unreality and seek the Reality is scientific.

D.: I mean there must be a gradual elimination, first of the mind, then of the intellect, then of the ego.

M.: The Self alone is Real. All others are unreal. The mind and intellect do not remain apart from you.

The Bible says, “Be still and know that I am God”. Stillness is the sole requisite for the realisation of the Self as God.

D.: Will the West ever understand this teaching?

M.: There is no question of time and space. Understanding depends on ripeness of mind. What does it matter if one lives in the East or in the West?

Sri Bhagavan referred the lady to a few stanzas in *Truth Revealed* and to *Thayumanavar*. She retired.

Later Sri Bhagavan said the whole Vedanta is contained in the two Biblical statements:

“I am that I AM” and “Be still and know that I am God.”

17th April, 1937

Talk 403

There was some reference to the extract from the *Modern Psychological Review*, wondering if any instruments could be of use in detecting the Heart-centre and if proper subjects were available for recording the experience of the adepts in the spiritual path, and so on. Others were speaking. Sri Bhagavan said: In the incident mentioned in the book *Self-Realization* that I became unconscious and symptoms of death supervened, I was all along aware. I could feel the action of the physical heart stopped and equally the action of the Heart-centre unimpaired. This state lasted about a quarter of an hour.

We asked if it was true that some disciples have had the privilege of feeling Sri Bhagavan’s Heart-centre to be on the right by placing their hands on Sri Bhagavan’s chest. Sri Bhagavan said, “Yes.” (Mr. Viswanatha Iyer, Narayana Reddi and others have said they felt Sri Bhagavan’s Heart-centre to be on the right by placing their hands on his chest).

A devotee rightly observed that if hands could feel and locate the Heart-centre, delicate scientific instruments should certainly do it.

D.: The Heart is said to be on the right, on the left or in the centre. With such differences of opinion how are we to meditate on *Hridaya*?

M.: You *are* and it is a fact. *Dhyana* is by you, of you, and in you. It must go on where you are. It cannot be outside you. So you are the centre of *dhyana* and that is the Heart.

A location is however given to it with reference to the body. You know that you *are*. Where are you? You are in the body and not out of it. Yet not the whole body. Though you pervade the whole body still you admit of a centre where from all your thoughts start and wherein they subside. Even when the limbs are amputated you are there but with defective senses. So a centre must be admitted. That is called the Heart. The Heart is not merely the centre but the Self. Heart is only another name for the Self.

Doubts arise only when you identify it with something tangible and physical. The scriptures no doubt describe it as the source of 101 *nadis*, etc. In *Yoga Vasishtha* Chudala says that *kundalini* is composed of 101 *nadis*, thus identifying one with the other.

Heart is no conception, no object for meditation. But it is the seat of meditation; the Self remains all alone. You see the body in the Heart, the world in it. There is nothing separate from it. So all kinds of effort are located there only.

21st May, 1937

Talk 413

A visitor asked:

While making *nama-japa* and after continuing it for an hour or more I fall into a state like sleep. On waking up, I recollect that my *japa* has been interrupted. So I proceed again.

M.: “Like sleep.” That is right. It is the natural state. Because you are now associated with the ego you consider the natural state to be something which interrupts your work. You must repeat the experience until you realise that it is your natural state. You will then find that

japa, etc., is extraneous. Still, it will be going on automatically. Your present doubt is due to the false identity.

Japa means clinging to one thought to the exclusion of all other thoughts. That is the purpose of *japa*; it leads to *dhyana* which ends in Self-Realisation.

Talk 418

Asked if Sri Bhagavan had read *Kamba Ramayana*, Sri Bhagavan said: No. I have not read anything. All my learning is limited to what I learnt before my 14th year. Since then I have had no inclination to read or learn. People wonder how I speak of Bhagavad Gita, etc. It is due to hearsay. I have not read Gita nor waded through commentaries for its meaning. When I hear a sloka I think that its meaning is clear and I say it. That is all and nothing more. Similarly with my other quotations. They come out naturally. I realise that the Truth is beyond speech and intellect. Why then should I project the mind to read, understand and repeat stanzas, etc.? Their purpose is to know the Truth. The purpose having been gained, there is no use engaging in studies.

Someone remarked: If Sri Bhagavan had been inclined to study there would not be a saint today.

M.: Probably all my studies were finished in past births and I was surfeit. There is therefore no *samskara* operating now in that direction.

8th January, 1938

Talk 442

While explaining a stanza of his own Sri Bhagavan observed:

The sun illumines the universe, whereas the Sun of Arunachala is so dazzling that the universe is obscured and an unbroken brilliance remains. But it is not realised in the present state and can be realised only if the lotus of the heart blossoms. The ordinary lotus blossoms

in the light of the visible sun, whereas the subtle Heart blossoms only before the Sun of Suns. May Arunachala make my heart blossom so that His unbroken brilliance may shine all alone! Further on, Sri Bhagavan continued:

The mirror reflects objects; yet they are not real because they cannot remain apart from the mirror. Similarly, the world is said to be a reflection in the mind as it does not remain in the absence of mind. The question arises: if the universe is a reflection, there must be a real object known as the universe in order that it might be reflected in the mind. This amounts to an admission of the existence of an objective universe. Truly speaking, it is not so.

Therefore the dream illustration is set forth. The dream world has no objective existence. How then is it created? Some mental impressions should be admitted. They are called *vasanas*. How were the *vasanas* in the mind? The answer is: they were subtle. Just as a whole tree is contained potentially in a seed, so the world is in the mind.

Then it is asked: A seed is the product of the tree which must have existed once in order that it may be reproduced. So the world also must have been there some time. The answer is, No! There must have been several incarnations to gather the impressions which are re-manifested in the present form. I must have existed before as I do now. The straight way to find an answer will be to see if the world is there. Admitting the existence of the world I must admit a seer who is no other than myself. Let me find myself so that I may know the relation between the world and the seer. When I seek the Self and abide as the Self there is no world to be seen. What is the Reality then? The seer only and certainly not the world.

Such being the truth the man continues to argue on the basis of the reality of the world. Whoever asked him to accept a brief for the world?

Yoga Vasishtha clearly defines Liberation as the abandonment of the false and remaining as Being.

3rd February, 1938

Talk 450

Miss Umadevi, a Polish lady convert to Hinduism, asked Sri Bhagavan: I once before told Sri Bhagavan how I had a vision of Siva at about the time of my conversion to Hinduism. A similar experience recurred to me at Courtallam. These visions are momentary. But they are blissful. I want to know how they might be made permanent and continuous. Without Siva

there is no life in what I see around me. I am so happy to think of Him. Please tell me how His vision may be everlasting to me.

M.: You speak of a vision of Siva. Vision is always of an object. That implies the existence of a subject. The value of the vision is the same as that of the seer. (That is to say, the nature of the vision is on the same plane as that of the seer.) Appearance implies disappearance also. Whatever appears must also disappear. A vision can never be eternal. But Siva is eternal. The *pratyaksha* (vision) of Siva to the eye signifies the existence of the eyes to see; the *buddhi* (intellect) lying behind the sight; the seer behind the *buddhi* and the sight; and finally the Consciousness underlying the seer. This *pratyaksha* (vision) is not as real as one imagines it to be, because it is not intimate and inherent; it is not first-hand. It is the result of several successive phases of Consciousness. Of these, Consciousness alone does not vary. It is eternal. It is Siva. It is the Self.

The vision implies the seer. The seer cannot deny the existence of the Self. There is no moment when the Self as Consciousness does not exist; nor can the seer remain apart from Consciousness. This Consciousness is the eternal Being and the only Being. The seer cannot see himself. Does he deny his existence because he cannot see himself with the eyes as *pratyaksha* (in vision)? No! So, *pratyaksha* does not mean seeing, but BE-ing.

“To BE” is to realise - Hence I AM THAT I AM. I AM is Siva. Nothing else can be without Him. Everything has its being in Siva and because of Siva.

Therefore enquire “Who am I?” Sink deep within and abide as the Self. That is Siva as BE-ing. Do not expect to have visions of Him repeated. What is the difference between the objects you see and Siva? He is both the subject and the object. You cannot be without Siva. Siva is always realised here and now. If you think you have not realised Him it is wrong. This is the obstacle for realising Siva. Give up that thought also and realisation is there.

D.: Yes. But how shall I effect it as quickly as possible?

M.: This is the obstacle for realisation. Can there be the individual without Siva? Even now He is you. There is no question of time. If there be a moment of non-realisation, the question of realisation can arise. But as it is you cannot be without Him. He is already realised, ever realised and never non-realised.

Surrender to Him and abide by His will whether he appears or vanishes; await His pleasure. If you ask Him to do as you please, it is not surrender but command to Him. You cannot have Him obey you and yet think that you have surrendered. He knows what is best and when and how to do it. Leave everything entirely to Him. His is the burden: you have no longer any cares. All your cares are His. Such is surrender. This is *bhakti*.

Or, enquire to whom these questions arise. Dive deep in the Heart and remain as the Self. One of these two ways is open to the aspirant.

Sri Bhagavan also added: There is no being who is not conscious and therefore who is not Siva. Not only is he Siva but also all else of which he is aware or not aware. Yet he thinks in sheer ignorance that he sees the universe in diverse forms. But if he sees his Self he is not aware of his separateness from the universe; in fact his individuality and the other entities vanish although they persist in all their forms. Siva is seen as the universe. But the seer does not see the background itself. Think of the man who sees only the cloth and not the cotton of which it is made; or of the man who sees the pictures moving on the screen in a cinema show and not the screen itself as the background; or again the man who sees the letters which he reads but not the paper on which they are written. The objects are thus Consciousness and forms. But the ordinary person sees the objects in the universe but not Siva in these forms. Siva is the Being assuming these forms and the Consciousness seeing them. That is to say, Siva is the background underlying both the subject and the object, and again Siva in Repose and Siva in Action, or Siva and Sakti, or the Lord and the Universe. Whatever it is said to be, it is only Consciousness whether in repose or in action. Who is there that is not conscious? So, who is not realised? How then can questions arise doubting realisation or desiring it? If 'I am not *pratyaksha* to me, I can then say that Siva is not *pratyaksha*.

These questions arise because you have limited the Self to the body, only then the ideas of within and without, of the subject and the object, arise. The objective visions have no intrinsic value. Even if they are everlasting they cannot satisfy the person. Uma has Siva always with Her. Both together form *Ardhanariswara*. Yet she wanted to know Siva in His true nature. She made *tapas*. In her *dhyana* she saw a bright light. She thought: "This cannot be Siva for it is within the compass of my vision. I am greater than this light." So she resumed her *tapas*. Thoughts disappeared. Stillness prevailed. She then realised that BE-ing is Siva in His true nature.

Muruganar cited Appar's stanza:-

"To remove my darkness and give me light, Thy Grace must work through ME only."

Sri Bhagavan mentioned Manickavachagar's:

“We do *bhajana* and the rest. But we have not seen nor heard of those who had seen Thee.”
One cannot see God and yet retain individuality. The seer and the seen unite into one Being.
There is no cogniser, nor cognition, nor the cognised. All merge into One Supreme Siva only!

5th March, 1938

Talk 464

A passage from *Arunachala Mahatmya* (the Glory of Arunachala) was read out. It related to Pangunni (a lame sage) who had his legs made whole by the grace of Sri Arunachala. Sri Bhagavan then related the story of a man whom Sri Maharshi had seen when He was in *Gurumurtham*. The man was one Kuppu Iyer. His legs were useless and he could not walk. He was once on his way to Vettavalam, moving on his buttocks. An old man suddenly appeared before him and said “Get up and walk. Why do you move on your buttocks?” Kuppu Iyer was excited and beside himself. Involuntarily he rose up and walked freely. After going a short distance, he looked behind to see the stranger who made him walk. But he could not find anyone. He narrated the incident to all those who were surprised to see him walk. Any old man in the town can bear witness to Kuppu Iyer regaining the use of his legs. Again a girl from the Girl’s School was decoyed and was being robbed of her jewels. Suddenly an old man appeared on the scene, rescued the girl, escorted her to her home and then disappeared.

Often such mysterious happenings occur in Tiruvannamalai.

6th March, 1938

Talk 465

Sri Bhagavan explained to a retired Judge of the High Court some points in the *Upadesa Saram* as follows:-

(1) Meditation should remain unbroken as a current. If unbroken it is called *samadhi* or *Kundalini sakti*.

(2) The mind may be latent and merge in the Self; it must necessarily rise up again; after it rises up one finds oneself only as ever before. For in this state the mental predispositions are present there in latent form to remanifest under favourable conditions.

(3) Again the mind activities can be completely destroyed. This differs from the former mind, for here the attachment is lost, never to reappear. Even though the man sees the world after he has been in the *samadhi* state, the world will be taken only at its worth, that is to say it is the phenomenon of the One Reality. The True Being can be realised only in *samadhi*; what was then is also now. Otherwise it cannot be Reality or Ever-present Being. What was in *samadhi* is here and now too. Hold it and it is your natural condition of Being. *Samadhi* practice must lead to it. Otherwise how can *nirvikalpa samadhi* be of any use in which a man remains as a log of wood? He must necessarily rise up from it sometime or other and face the world. But in *sahaja samadhi* he remains unaffected by the world.

So many pictures pass over the cinema screen: fire burns away everything; water drenches all; but the screen remains unaffected. The scenes are only phenomena which pass away leaving the screen as it was. Similarly the world phenomena simply pass on before the *Jnani*, leaving him unaffected.

You may say that people find pain or pleasure in worldly phenomena. It is owing to superimposition. This must not happen. With this end in view practice is made.

Practice lies in one of the two courses: devotion or knowledge. Even these are not the goals. *Samadhi* must be gained; it must be continuously practised until *sahaja samadhi* results. Then there remains nothing more to do.

24th January, 1939

Talk 614

There were a few respectable men in the hall. Sri Bhagavan spoke to them some time after their arrival. Where is the use of trying to remember the past or discover the future? That

which matters is only the present. Take care of it and the other things will take care of themselves.

D.: Is it bad to desire something?

M.: One should not be elated on having his desire fulfilled or disappointed on being frustrated. To be elated on the fulfilment of desire is so deceitful. A gain will certainly be lost ultimately. Therefore elation must end in pain at a future date. One should not give place to feelings of pleasure or pain, come what may. How do the events affect the person? You do not grow by acquiring something nor wither away by losing it. You remain what you always are.

D.: We worldly men cannot resist desire.

M.: You may desire but be prepared for any eventuality. Make effort, but do not be lost in the result. Accept with equanimity whatever happens. For pleasure and pain are mere mental modes. They have no relation to the objective realities.

D.: How?

M.: There were two young friends in a village in South India. They were learned and wanted to earn something with which they might afford relief to their respective families. They took leave of their parents and went to Benares on a pilgrimage. On the way one of them died. The other was left alone. He wandered for a time, and in the course of a few months he made a good name and earned some money. He wanted to earn more before he returned to his home. In the meantime he met a pilgrim who was going south and would pass through the native village of the young pandit. He requested the new acquaintance to tell his parents that he would return after a few months with some funds and also that his companion had died on the way. The man came to the village and found the parents. He gave them the news, but changed the names of the two men. Consequently the parents of the living man bemoaned his supposed loss and the parents of the dead man were happy expecting the return of their son bringing rich funds as well.

You see therefore that pleasure and pain have no relation to the actualities but are mere mental modes.

1st February, 1939

Talk 619

An Andhra gentleman read out a verse from the *Viveka Chudamani* setting forth the sense of the *Maitreyi Brahmana* of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* and asked the meaning of *atma* which occurred there.

M.: The Self.

D.: Is not *prema* (love) for something else?

M.: The desire for happiness (*sukha prema*) is a proof of the ever-existing happiness of the Self. Otherwise how can desire for it arise in you? If headache was natural to human beings no one would try to get rid of it. But everyone that has a headache tries to get rid of it, because he has known a time when he had no headache. He desires only that which is natural to him. So too he desires happiness because happiness is natural to him. Being natural, it is not acquired. Man's attempts can only be to get rid of misery. If that be done the ever-present bliss is felt. The primal bliss is obscured by the non-self which is synonymous with non-bliss or misery. *Duhkha nasam = sukha prapti*. (Loss of unhappiness amounts to gain of happiness.) Happiness mixed with misery is only misery. When misery is eliminated then the ever-present bliss is said to be gained. Pleasure which ends in pain is misery. Man wants to eschew such pleasure. Pleasures are *priya*, *moda* and *pra-moda*. When a desired object is near at hand there arises *priya*: when it is taken possession of *moda* arises; when it is being enjoyed *pra-moda* prevails. The reason for the pleasureableness of these states is that *one thought excludes all others, and then this single thought also merges into the Self*. These states are enjoyed in the *Anandamaya kosa* only. As a rule *vijnanamaya kosa* prevails on waking. In deep sleep all thoughts disappear and the state of obscurity is one of bliss; there the prevailing body is the *Anandamaya*. These are sheaths and not the core, which is interior to all these. It lies beyond waking, dream and deep sleep. That is the Reality and consists of true bliss (*nijananda*).

D.: Is not *hatha yoga* necessary for the inquiry into the Self?

M.: Each one finds some one method suitable to himself, because of latent tendencies (*purva samskara*).

D.: Can *hatha yoga* be accomplished at my age?

M.: Why do you think of all that? Because you think it exterior to yourself you desire it and try for it. But do you not exist all along? Why do you leave yourself and go after something external?

D.: It is said in *Aparoksha-anubhuti* that *hatha yoga* is a necessary aid for inquiry into the Self.

M.: The *hatha yogis* claim to keep the body fit so that the enquiry may be effected without obstacles. They also say that life must be prolonged so that the enquiry may be carried to a successful end. Furthermore there are those who use some medicines (*kayakalpa*) with that end in view. Their favourite example is: the screen must be perfect before the painting is begun. Yes, but *which is the screen and which the painting?* According to them the body is the screen and the inquiry into the Self is the painting. But is not the body itself a picture on the screen, the Self?

D.: But *hatha yoga* is so much spoken of as an aid.

M.: Yes. Even great pandits well versed in the Vedanta continue the practice of it. Otherwise their minds will not subside. So you may say it is useful for those who cannot otherwise still the mind.

D.: *Saguna upasana* (worship of the personal God) is said to be imperfect. It is also said that *nirguna upasana* (devotion to the impersonal) is hard and risky. I am fit for the former only. What is to be done?

M.: The *Saguna* merges into the *nirguna* in the long run. The *saguna* purifies the mind and takes one to the final goal. The afflicted one, the seeker of knowledge, and the seeker of gains are all dear to God. *But the Jnani is the Self of God.*

1st April, 1939

Talk 653

Some teachers who attended the Teachers' Guild meeting in the town came on a visit to the hall. One of them asked Sri Bhagavan: "I seem to be wandering in a forest because I do not find the way."

M.: This idea of being in a forest must go. It is such ideas which are at the root of the trouble.

D.: But I do not find the way.

M.: Where is the forest and where is the way unless they are in you? You are as you are and yet you speak of a forest and ways.

D.: But I am obliged to move in society.

M.: Society is also an idea similar to that of the forest.

D.: I leave my home and go and mix in society.

M.: Who does it?

D.: The body moves and does all.

M.: Quite so. Now that you identify yourself with the body you feel the trouble. The trouble is in your mind. You think that you are the body or that you are the mind. But there are occasions when you are free from both. For example in deep slumber, you create a body and a world in your dream. That represents your mental activities. In your waking state you think that you are the body and then the idea of forest and the rest arise.

Now, consider the situation. You are an unchanging and continuous being who remains in all these states which are constantly changing and therefore transient. But you are always there. It follows that these fleeting objects are mere phenomena which appear on your being like pictures which move across a screen. The screen does not move when the picture moves. Similarly, you do not move from where you are even when the body leaves the home and mixes in society.

Your body, the society, the forest and the ways are all in you; you are not in them. You are the body also but not this body only. If you remain as your pure Self, the body and its movements need not affect you.

D.: This can be realised only by the Grace of the master. I was reading *Sri Bhagavata*; it says that Bliss can be had only by the dust of the Master's feet. I pray for Grace.

M.: What is Bliss but your own being? You are not apart from Being which is the same as Bliss. You are now thinking that you are the mind or the body which are both changing and transient. But you are unchanging and eternal. That is what you should know.

D.: It is darkness and I am ignorant.

M.: This ignorance must go. Again, who says 'I am ignorant'? He must be the witness of ignorance. That is what you are. Socrates said, "I know that I do not know." Can it be ignorance? It is wisdom.

D.: Why then do I feel unhappy when I am in Vellore and feel peace in Your Presence?

M.: Can this feeling in this place be Bliss? When you leave the place you say you are unhappy. Therefore this peace is not permanent, nay it is mixed with unhappiness which is felt in another place. Therefore you cannot find Bliss in places and in periods of time. It must be permanent in order that it may be useful. Such permanent being is yourself. Be the Self and that is Bliss. You are always That.

You say that you left Vellore, travelled in the train, arrived in Tiruvannamalai, entered the hall and found happiness. When you go back you are not happy in Vellore. Now, do you

really move from place to place? Even considering you to be the body, the body sits in a cart at the gate of the home, the cart moves on to the railway station. Then it gets into a railway carriage which speeds on from Vellore to Tiruvannamalai. There it gets into another cart which brings the body here. Yet when you are asked, you say that you travelled all the way from Vellore. Your body remains where it was and all the places went past it.

Such ideas are due to the false identity which is so deep-rooted.

Another asked: Should we understand the world as transient (*anitya*)?

M.: Why so? Because you are now considering it to be permanent (*nitya*) the Scriptures tell you that it is not so in order to wean you from wrong ideas. This should be done by knowing yourself to be eternal (*nitya*) and not by branding the world as transitory (*anitya*).

D.: We are told to practise indifference (*udasina*) which is possible only if the world is unreal.

M.: Yes. *Oudasiyam abhipsitam*. Indifference is advised. But what is it? It is absence of love and hatred. When you realise the Self on which these phenomena pass, will you love or hate them? That is the meaning of indifference.

D.: That will lead to want of interest in our work. Should we do our duty or not?

M.: Yes - certainly. Even if you try not to do your duty you will be perforce obliged to do it. Let the body complete the task for which it came into being.

Sri Krishna also says in the *Gita*, whether Arjuna liked it or not he would be forced to fight. When there is work to be done by you, you cannot keep away; nor can you continue to do a thing when you are not required to do it, that is to say, when the work allotted to you has been done. In short, the work will go on and you must take your share in it - the share which is allotted to you.

D.: How is it to be done?

M.: Like an actor playing his part in a drama - free from love or hatred.